

# Democrats threaten delay on Supreme Court nominee

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*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — Senate Democrats vowed Thursday to impede Judge Neil Gorsuch’s path to the Supreme Court, setting up a political showdown with implications for future openings on the high court.

Still irate that Republicans blocked President Barack Obama’s nominee, Democrats consider Gorsuch a threat to a wide range of civil rights and think he was too evasive during 20 hours of questioning. Whatever the objections, Republicans who control the Senate are expected to ensure that President Donald Trump’s pick reaches the bench, perhaps before the middle of April.

The Democratic leader in the Senate, Chuck Schumer of New York, was among five senators to declare their oppo-



AP Photo/Susan Walsh

**Supreme Court Justice nominee Neil Gorsuch listens as he is asked a question on Capitol Hill in Washington, Wednesday during his confirmation hearing before the Senate Judiciary Committee.**

sition to Gorsuch Thursday, even before the Judiciary Committee hearing on the nomination had ended.

Schumer said he would lead a filibuster against Gorsuch, criticizing him as a judge who “almost instinctively favors the powerful over the weak.”

Schumer said the 49-year-old

Coloradan would not serve as a check on Trump or be a mainstream justice.

“I have concluded that I cannot support Neil Gorsuch’s nomination,” Schumer said on the Senate floor. “My vote will be no and I urge my colleagues to do the same.”

White House press secretary

Sean Spicer called on Schumer to call off the filibuster, saying “it represents the type of partisanship that Americans have grown tired of.”

A Supreme Court seat has been open for more than 13 months, since the death of Justice Antonin Scalia. Like Scalia, Gorsuch has a mainly conservative record in more than 10 years as a federal appellate judge.

Shortly before Schumer’s announcement, Pennsylvania Sen. Bob Casey, who faces re-election next year in a state Trump won, also announced his opposition. Casey said he had “serious concerns about Judge Gorsuch’s rigid and restrictive judicial philosophy, manifest in a number of opinions he has written on the 10th Circuit.”

Democratic Sens. Tom Carper of Delaware and Ron Wyden of Oregon, and Sen. Bernie Sanders, the Vermont independent, also said they

would vote against Trump’s nominee, among at least 11 senators who say they will oppose Gorsuch in the face of pressure from liberals to resist all things Trump, including his nominees.

No Democrat has yet pledged to support Gorsuch, but Sen. Joe Manchin of West Virginia has said he is open to voting for him. Manchin spoke Wednesday after watching the nominee emerge unscathed from testimony to the Judiciary Committee.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., said Democratic threats of delay, in the face of what he called Gorsuch’s outstanding performance, stem from their base’s refusal “to accept the outcome of the election.”

In an interview with The Associated Press on Tuesday, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell seemed ready to change Senate rules, if necessary, to confirm Gorsuch with

a simple majority rather than the 60 votes now required to move forward. Such a change also would apply to future Supreme Court nominees and would be especially important in the event that Trump gets to fill another opening and replace a liberal justice or Justice Anthony Kennedy, the court’s so-called swing vote. In 2013, Democrats changed the rules to prohibit delaying tactics for all nominees other than for the high court.

The Judiciary panel is expected to vote in the next two weeks to recommend Gorsuch favorably to the full Senate.

Hearings for a Supreme Court nominee usually dominate Congress, but that’s not been the case over the four days of hearings. The Republican push to dismantle Obama’s Affordable Care Act and the controversy surrounding the investigation into contact between Trump associates and Russia overshadowed the hearings.

## Police say UK attacker wasn’t on terror radar

LONDON (AP) — Authorities on Thursday identified a 52-year-old Briton as the man who mowed down pedestrians and stabbed a policeman to death outside Parliament, saying he had a long criminal record and once was investigated for extremism — but was not currently on a terrorism watch list.

As lawmakers returned to work a day after the rampage killed three people and injured at least 30, British Prime Minister Theresa May vowed: “We are not afraid.”

“Today we meet as normal — as generations have done before us, and as future generations will continue to do,” she said to cheers in the House of Commons.

The Islamic State group claimed responsibility for Wednesday’s attack, which police said was carried out by Khalid Masood, a U.K.-born resident of the West Midlands in central England. Masood plowed a rented SUV into pedestrians on London’s Westminster Bridge, killing an American man and a British woman and injuring more than 30 people of almost a dozen nationalities.

He fatally stabbed a policeman inside the gates of

Parliament before being shot to death by an armed officer.

Vincenzo Mangiacarpe, an Italian boxer visiting Parliament, said he saw the attacker get out of the car wielding two knives.

“You can imagine if someone was playing a drum on your back with two knives — he gave him around 10 stabs in the back, then he left the policeman and he came toward us,” Mangiacarpe said.

The dead were identified as Kurt Cochran, 54, of Utah and British school administrator Aysha Frade, 43 — both struck on the bridge — and 48-year-old Constable Keith Palmer, a 15-year veteran of the Metropolitan Police.

Police arrested eight people — three women and five men — on suspicion of preparing terrorist acts as authorities sought Masood’s motive and possible support network. One arrest was in London, while the others were in the West Midlands city of Birmingham. Police said they were searching properties in Birmingham, London and Wales.

Masood’s convictions between 1983 and 2003 included assault, weapons possession and public order offenses, London police said.

## Keystone XL pipeline set for U.S. approval

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration will approve the Keystone XL pipeline on Friday, senior U.S. officials said, ending years of delay for a project that has served as a flashpoint in the national debate about climate change.

The State Department will recommend the pipeline is in U.S. interests, clearing the way for the White House to grant a presidential permit to TransCanada to build the \$8 billion pipeline, two officials said. It’s a sharp reversal from the Obama administration, which rejected the pipeline after deeming it contrary to national interests.

The officials, who weren’t authorized to speak publicly on the matter and demanded anonymity, said the State Department’s recommendation and the White House’s final approval would occur Friday.

The White House declined to comment, other than to say it would offer an update Friday. State Department spokesman Mark Toner wouldn’t reveal the decision, but said the agency had re-examined Keystone thoroughly after ruling against the proposed project barely two years ago.

“We’re looking at new factors,” Toner said. “I don’t want to speak to those until we’ve reached a decision or conclusion.”

The 1,700-mile pipeline, as envisioned, would carry oil from tar sands in Alberta, Canada, to refineries along the Texas Gulf Coast, passing through Montana, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas and Oklahoma. The pipeline would move roughly 800,000 barrels of oil per day, more than one-fifth of the oil Canada exports to the U.S.

Oil industry advocates say the pipeline will improve U.S. energy security and create jobs, although how many is widely disputed. Calgary-based TransCanada has promised as many as 13,000 construction jobs — 6,500 a year over two years — but the State Department previously estimated a far smaller number.

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